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ABSTRACT

This evaluation of the Kentucky Preschool Program (KPP) focused on two broad areas: (1) readiness for kindergarten; and (2) promotion of language and literacy in the classroom and at home. Key findings include the following: (1) most children who were ineligible because of family income status successfully transitioned to kindergarten; (2) several differences were found between groups of children rated as more and as less prepared for kindergarten than other children, including differences in academic motivation, independence, social-emotional status, relationships with others, and family composition; (3) guidelines were developed for parents and teachers to provide experiences and activities to promote kindergarten readiness skills; (4) the primary reasons parents chose not to enroll their child in KPP were that their child was too young, they wanted to keep their child home with them, and logistical concerns; (5) key language and literacy experiences that teachers consistently implement included reading to children and providing follow-up activities related to stories; and (6) important language/literacy experiences not consistently occurring in preschool classrooms included book availability, writing utensils, and the use of strategies to extend children's play and support higher level thinking. Recommendations stemming from this and previous evaluation findings included studying further the program's eligibility criteria, summarizing readiness indicators and key experiences in a variety of formats for different stakeholders, and implementing a systematic professional development program focusing of teachers' use of recommended practices in language and literacy development and support of parents' use of these practices at home. (Eight appendices include data collection instruments.) (KB)

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1998-1999 Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project

Final Report

December 1999

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1998-1999 Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project
Executive Summary

Background

In the fall of 1991, the Kentucky Department of Education contracted with researchers at the University of Kentucky to conduct a third party evaluation of the Kentucky Preschool Program. The first year of the project broadly addressed program quality, child outcomes, and cost benefits. Beginning in the 1992-1993 school year, the focus of the project shifted to a more detailed analysis of child outcomes and program quality. Over the course of the next six years of the project, data consistently demonstrated the following positive results:

- During their year in the Preschool Program, at-risk children and children with disabilities make significant progress in social, motor, language, cognition, and self-help skills.
- Teachers rate children who attended the Preschool Program as being as prepared as their peers from higher income families who were not eligible for the Program and more prepared than their peers who were eligible for the program but who did not attend.
- As Preschool Program participants move through the primary program, they continue to do as well as their peers suggesting that the head start that the Preschool Program provides them supports their development throughout their elementary school experiences.

Goals of the 1998-1999 Study

In the spring of 1998, the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project (KPEP) Faculty met with staff from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to identify goals for the 1998-1999 study. Based on a review of data from previous years, input from the project advisory board, and a review of KDE priorities and initiatives, two broad areas were identified: a) readiness for kindergarten and b) promoting language and literacy in the classroom and home.

Readiness for Kindergarten. One of the goals of the Kentucky Preschool Program is to give children an early childhood experience that provides them with the skills and experiences needed to support their success in kindergarten. The Kentucky Department of Education, project staff, and the advisory board identified the following key issues related to readiness:

- the identification of family, behavioral, and environmental factors that are associated with children's successful transition to kindergarten as a strategy for considering an expansion of the eligibility criteria for the Preschool Program beyond the current income guidelines;
- the identification of indicators/experiences associated with children's readiness for kindergarten;
- the identification of factors that affect parents' decisions about sending their child to the Preschool Program.

Promoting Language and Literacy Skills. While teachers identify language as a primary focus of the Preschool Program, data collected during previous years of the project indicate

that children make less progress in language than in any other developmental area. In order to address these issues, several key strategies were implemented:

- data on language and literacy practices in classrooms and child skills from previous years of the evaluation were reanalyzed;
- a review of the professional development literature was conducted in order to identify a set of recommended practices related to promoting children's language and literacy skills;
- an observation checklist was developed based on these practices and was used to assess language and literacy practices in 23 preschool classrooms;
- parent and teacher surveys, based on the recommended practices, were sent to parents and teachers from the 23 classrooms in which we observed;
- parents and teachers were interviewed about their use of the recommended practices and about related professional development issues;
- a set of professional development recommendations was developed based on the information collected from these sources.

Outcomes of the 1998-1999 Studies

The purpose of this section is to summarize the outcomes of the studies described above. The results, conclusions and recommendations are described in detail in the attached report.

Readiness for Kindergarten

- Most children, in our sample, who were not eligible for the Preschool Program because of the income status of their family (i.e., middle and upper income), made a successful transition to kindergarten.
- Two groups of children were compared for the purpose of identifying factors that might affect their success in kindergarten: children who were rated by their teachers as being more prepared for kindergarten than most children and children who were rated as being less prepared for kindergarten than most children. Several significant differences were found between these two groups related to: a) academic motivation, b) independence, c) social-emotional status, d) relationships with others, and e) family composition.
- A series of focus groups was conducted in order to reach consensus on key indicators and experiences associated with children's successful transition to kindergarten. This resulted in the development of a document that provides parents and teachers with guidelines for using developmentally appropriate experiences and activities to promote the skills that children need to be successful in kindergarten.
- The primary reasons parents chose not to send their children to the Preschool Program were: a) they felt that their child was too young for school; b) they wanted to keep their child at home with them; and c) logistical concerns. The primary reasons that parents chose to send their children to the Preschool Program related to the benefits to the child.

Promoting Language and Literacy Skills in the Classroom and Home

- Classroom observations, parent and teacher surveys, and interviews identified several key language and literacy experiences that teachers consistently implement including: reading to children, providing follow-up activities related to stories, demonstrating that words convey meaning, and providing children with feedback related to language and literacy instruction.
- The observations, surveys, and interviews also resulted in the identification of important language and literacy experiences that were not consistently occurring in preschool classrooms including: the availability of books, writing utensils, and other literacy materials throughout the classroom; the use of facilitation strategies that build on the child's current knowledge, extend their play, and support children's use of higher level thinking skills; and the use of strategies and activities that introduce children to written language.
- These findings resulted in the identification of several professional development recommendations. These recommendations focused both on the content and process of professional development. The content recommendations reflected the areas of need identified above. The critical features of the process recommendations included: developing a comprehensive plan for professional development that reflects a holistic approach to language and literacy instruction, individualizing professional development activities based on an assessment of the strengths and needs of individual teachers, building ongoing support and assistance into professional development activities, and including families in the development and implementation of the activities.

Issues and Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on a careful analysis of the findings from the 1998-1999 study as well as findings from previous years of the evaluation project:

- The Kentucky Department of Education should further study eligibility criteria for the Kentucky Preschool Program. Some of the factors that were identified as being associated with successful transition to kindergarten will be hard to measure prior to children's entry into Preschool. In addition; this study should further consider the factors that prevent parents from sending their children to preschool in order to determine if there are programmatic changes that might increase the number of eligible children who are served by the programs.
- The readiness indicators and key experiences should be summarized in a variety of formats that address the unique needs of different stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers). This should include a clear KDE policy statement about the appropriate uses of the document.
- A systematic professional development effort should be implemented that focuses on teachers' use of recommended practices in language and literacy development and their support of parents' use of these practices at home. Given the relationship between children's early language development and their success in school, professional development efforts related to promoting language and literacy skills should be a major initiative. This initiative should be coordinated with other literacy projects and initiatives that are ongoing.

Study 1: Readiness for Kindergarten: An Examination of Issues Related to Supporting Children's Successful Transition to Kindergarten

For the last several years, public opinion about the Kentucky Preschool Program has been quite positive. This has been, in part, based on data that indicate that children make progress as a result of participation in the program (Hemmeter, Townley, Wilson, & Bridge, 1996) as well as the national focus on early childhood education. The same factors that support the program also have resulted in an increased interest in extending eligibility for the preschool program to four-year-olds other than those who are currently eligible. In 1997, an ad hoc study group was convened in response to a request from the Kentucky Board of Education for a report on "issues and options that could support the development and learning of young children prior to entry into the primary school program" (Ad Hoc Study Group, 1998, p. 1). This report resulted in two recommendations that formed the basis for the current study:

1. A study should be conducted for the purpose of determining which children might be in need of the Preschool Program who are not currently eligible. The ad hoc group recommended that this study be conducted prior to recommending how and to whom eligibility for the Preschool Program should be extended.
2. A program of studies, similar to the one that has been developed for primary through grades 12, should be developed that would address the "desired child learning outcomes and readiness experiences prior to entry into public school" (Ad Hoc Study Group, 1998, p. 4).

Eligibility Criteria for Publicly Funded Preschool Programs

The source of the following data is a report entitled "Prekindergarten Programs Funded by the States: Essential Elements for Policy Makers" (Mitchell, Ripple, & Chanana, 1998). Currently, there are 39 states that fund at least one kind of prekindergarten program. The number of children served ranges from less than 500 to over 40,000. Only 7 states limit their funding for programs to public schools only. State investments in preschool programs range from $1,000,000 to over $200,000,000 annually.

Of particular relevance to this study are the criteria that various states use for determining eligibility for public preschool programs. The majority of states limit eligibility to three and four-year olds. Only 10 states have established specific family income levels as a criterion for eligibility with 8 of those states using between 100% and 185% of the federal poverty level as the criteria. The other two states use the state median income as the criterion. Other criteria include: a) parents with low educational attainment levels, b) low birth weight, c) teen age mothers, d) substance abuse or neglect, e) children identified for child protective services, f) non-English speaking children, g) migrant and/or homeless families, h) families in states' welfare to work programs, i) children with disabilities, j) first-come, first served, and k) Head Start eligible children who are not being served.

While some states require that children meet one or more of the criteria listed above, other states use these criteria to rank children according to need and to make the program available to those most in need. In several states, risk factors are, to some extent, determined by individual school districts. In addition, in some states, there are state-specific guidelines. For example, Connecticut gives priority to children zoned for 14 "highest need school districts" as well as "severe need schools". Maryland uses a similar process in terms of identifying eligible schools using some of the risk factors listed above. Only Georgia's program is open to all four-year olds.

While there is variability across states in terms of eligibility criteria, the criteria that are used are consistent with research on the potential effects of risk factors on children's success (Yoshikawa, 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 1991). In addition, some of the criteria were designed based on an evaluation of the needs within individual states. For example, while Connecticut has some of the wealthiest districts in the country, they also have some very poor districts. Thus, their criteria give priority to serving children in the neediest districts.

There is evidence that well-designed comprehensive preschool programs result in positive outcomes for children with the types of risk factors discussed above (Barnett, 1995; Yoshikawa, 1995; Schweinhart, Barnes, & Weikart, 1993; Lazar & Darlington, 1982). However, the literature does not clearly delineate which of these risk factors place children most at-risk. In fact, in most studies, it is not possible to compare children with multiple risk factors because the presence of one risk factor often results in the presence of multiple risk factors. This makes it difficult to determine the relative effects of various risk factors.

Many preschool programs, such as Kentucky's Preschool Program (Steffy, 1992) and the Michigan School-Readiness Program (Florian, Schweinhart, & Epstein, 1997), for children with risk factors such as those described above, were designed to provide children with assistance in getting ready for school. Thus, one way to measure the extent to which preschool programs are serving the appropriate population is to study children when they are in kindergarten to determine readiness for kindergarten.

Research Questions

This study addressed three issues related to examining the population of children who are or might be in need of the Kentucky Preschool Program. Three questions were designed to address this policy issue:

1. Are there children who are having trouble in kindergarten who could benefit from the preschool program who are currently not eligible for the Kentucky Preschool Program?
2. What are the standards against which we should be judging the extent to which children are prepared for kindergarten?
3. What are the barriers to participation in the Preschool Program? What, if any, other programs do eligible children attend in place of the Preschool Program?

These three questions were developed after consultation with several different sources. First, these issues were raised by the Ad Hoc Study Group described above as important in terms of

determining if eligibility for the Preschool Program should be extended to additional children. Second, similar issues were identified during a meeting of the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project (KPEP) advisory board and in conversations with one of the project's national consultants. Finally, the questions were refined during a meeting with project staff and representatives of the Kentucky Department of Education.

Each of the three questions was addressed using different methods. The remainder of this report will be organized as follows: a) methods, results and summary and recommendations for question 1; b) methods, results, and summary and recommendations for question 2; and c) methods, results, and summary and recommendations for question 3.

Question 1

Are there children who are having trouble in kindergarten who could benefit from the preschool program who are currently not eligible for the preschool program. The purpose of this question was to determine if there were factors other than the income status of families that should be considered when determining children's eligibility for the Kentucky Preschool Program.

Methods

During each of the previous three years of the evaluation, three groups of kindergarten children were studied: a) children who were eligible for the Kentucky Preschool Program but who did not attend; b) children who attended the Kentucky Preschool Program; and c) children who were not eligible for the Program due to the income status (too high) of their family. For the purposes of answering this research question, we initially used only the group of children who were not eligible for the preschool program. However, as indicated below, the number of children from the noneligible group who did not make a successful transition to kindergarten was too small to make meaningful conclusions. As a result, we conducted additional analyses using all three groups of children.

All existing data (both demographic data and testing data) were analyzed to identify factors that are associated with children's readiness for kindergarten. Additional data were collected primarily through teacher and parent surveys. We attempted to collect current school data (e.g., report cards, referrals to special education, other referrals) but were unable to collect data on enough children to make analyses possible. This was primarily due to the fact that an insufficient number of parents returned the parent permission forms that were required prior to accessing those data. However, a survey was mailed directly to the parents of all children in the sample. This survey addressed additional risk factors (e.g., parent education level, prior caregiving arrangements, marital status) and is included in Appendix A. A multi-step process (e.g., multiple mailings, phone follow-up) that is consistent with recommended practices in survey research (Bourque & Fielder, 1995) was used to obtain this survey information.

Results

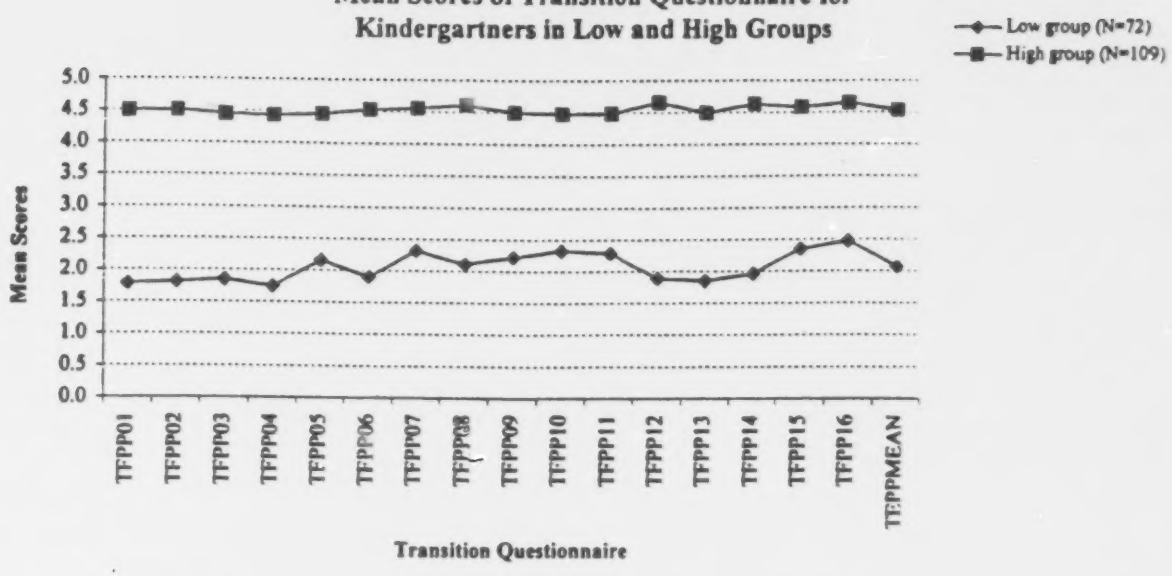
Using data from the Transition Questionnaire (See Appendix B) on the children who were **not eligible** for the preschool program, we identified a high group (n=72) and a low group (n=21) of children. The children in the low group were those whose scores on the Transition Questionnaire were in the lowest quartile, while the children in the high group were those whose scores were in the highest quartile on the same instrument. Because of the small number of children in the low group (n=21), it was not possible to conduct the analyses that we had planned to conduct. However, this finding is important in that it suggests that most of the children in our sample who were not eligible for the preschool program successfully transitioned into kindergarten.

Since we could not answer the original research question due to low numbers of children in the low transition group, we used all three groups of children (participants, eligible nonparticipants, ineligible nonparticipants) to attempt to identify some of the salient factors associated with children who have difficulty transitioning into kindergarten. Using the same process identified in the preceding paragraph, we identified a high transition group (n=109) and a low transition group (n=72). Statistically significant differences between the groups were found on all 16 items of the Transition Questionnaire (See Figure 1).

These two groups of children were then compared using two different measures: the Pupil Behavior Inventory (See Appendix C) and a Parent Survey (See Appendix A). The Pupil Behavior Inventory is a 34-item instrument that is completed by the teacher and includes five categories of behaviors: a) classroom conduct, b) academic motivation, c) social-emotional state, d) teacher dependence, and e) personal behavior. The data from this instrument indicated that children in the high transition group scored significantly higher across all categories of behaviors. Thus, children who were reported to be most prepared for kindergarten were those who exhibited appropriate social behaviors, were motivated to learn, demonstrated independence, and took responsibility for their own behavior. These data are presented in Figure 2.

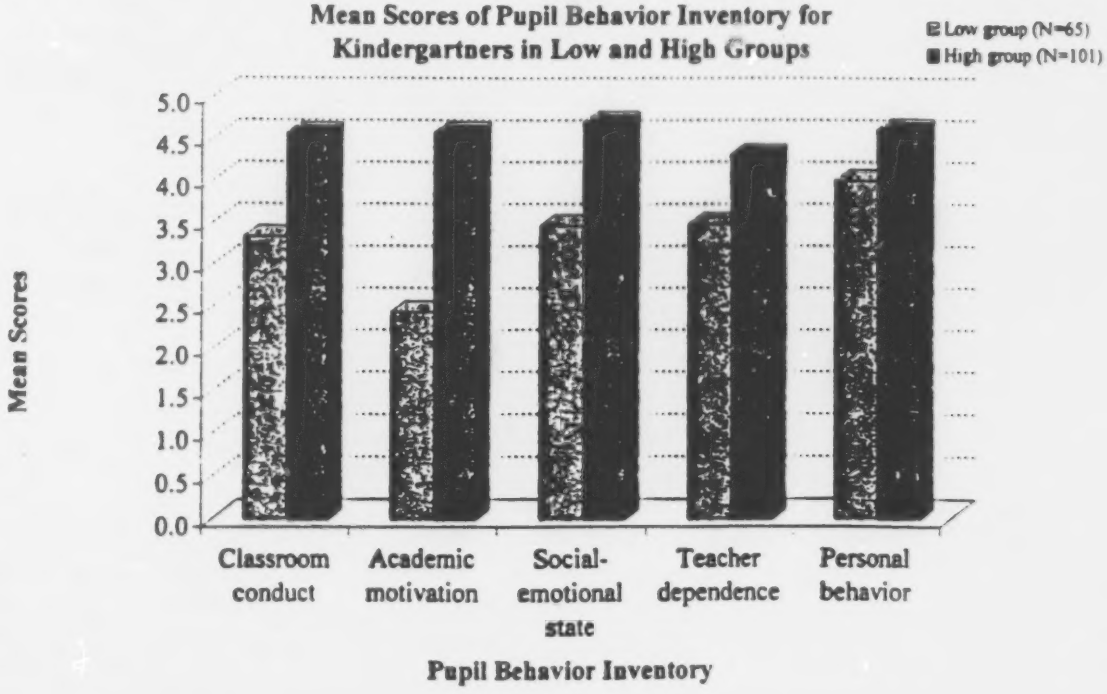
The parent survey asked parents to provide information on the child's health at birth, the family's living arrangements, parents' educational levels, the child's relationship with other people including the parents, the child's skills, behavior, and self-esteem, the child's experiences prior to preschool, and other relevant factors. This survey was developed based on information obtained from the professional literature and using eligibility requirements for preschool programs in other states. The survey was reviewed by the Kentucky Department of Education and the KPEP Technical Advisory Group and revisions were made based on their feedback

Figure 1
Mean Scores of Transition Questionnaire for Kindergartners in Low and High Groups



Statisitcally significant ($p < .05$) difference was found on all the items between the two groups.

Figure 2
Mean Scores of Pupil Behavior Inventory for Kindergartners in Low and High Groups



Statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) was found on all the items between the two groups.

Statistically significant differences were found between the high and low groups in the following areas:

- More parents of children in the high transition group rated their children as being smart, having a positive attitude, having a high self-esteem, being able to "bounce back" after major problems, and having good relationships with people outside the family.
- More children in the high transition group lived with both parents.
- Mothers and fathers of children in the high transition group had higher levels of education.
- More parents of children in the high transition group reported close relationships between the mother and the child and the father and the child.
- More children in the low transition group were from low income families, had been involved in serious accidents, and tended to move more frequently.

Summary and Recommendations

The results of this study provide preliminary information about factors that are related to children's successful transition to kindergarten. First, these findings indicate that the children in our sample who were not eligible for the Preschool Program (i.e., children from middle and high income families) were more likely to make a successful transition to kindergarten. This study did not examine what experiences these children had prior to kindergarten, but it is possible that they had a developmentally appropriate preschool experience similar to the Kentucky Preschool Program.

The findings from the analyses comparing the high and low transition groups (including both eligible and noneligible children) are consistent with other research on the effects of risk factors on children's success in school. Such research demonstrates that children who transition to school most successfully are most likely to come from homes with two parents, parents with higher education levels, mothers and fathers who feel closer to their children, and parents who view their children more positively on both behavioral and cognitive measures.

The presence of disabilities and family income status are used as eligibility criteria for the Kentucky Preschool Program. However, as indicated both in the study above and other research, income is only one factor associated with children's successful transition to school. Several of the other factors are related to the availability of other, non-income, parental resources. A broader set of eligibility criteria would lead to a larger number of Kentucky children having a successful transition to school.

Clearly this study provides only initial information on other potential eligibility criteria. We would like to recommend two additional strategies for further exploring an expansion of the eligibility criteria. First, as part of the development of the parent survey for this study, we reviewed eligibility criteria for Preschool Programs in other states. A critical review of other states' criteria and their programs' outcome data would provide additional information to use in considering expanding Kentucky's eligibility criteria. Second, in order to establish a rank

ordering of risk factors and related eligibility criteria, the Kentucky Department of Education could consider sponsoring an expanded investigation that would include the identification of a larger sample of children and families.

Question 2

The purpose of this study was to develop a set of key readiness experiences and indicators for Kentucky children moving into the primary program. The three primary steps used to develop this document were: a) an initial document of indicators/experiences was developed based on a review of existing research and the professional literature; b) a series of focus groups was conducted in order to reach consensus on the indicators/experiences; and c) the facilitators of the focus groups, project staff, and Kentucky Department of Education met to consolidate the data collected during the focus groups.

Development of the Indicators/Experiences

In order to develop an initial set of indicators/experiences, we conducted a review of the professional literature, materials from professional organizations, materials from the United States Department of Education and materials from the Kentucky Department of Education. This review resulted in the identification of fifteen documents which were then used to develop the initial draft of indicators/experiences. Over 250 indicators/experiences were identified from these documents. These indicators/experiences were then compared and consolidated as many were similar in both content and form. In order to be included in the document, the indicator/experience had to be developmentally appropriate and it had to be supported by at least two sources. This resulted in a total of 46 indicators/experiences in the initial draft of the document. This document was then reviewed by the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project's advisory board. Seven members of the advisory board responded. Using their feedback, the document was revised in a number of ways: a) wording was clarified; b) items were removed if a majority of the respondents indicated that it was not an important indicator/experience; c) items that were similar were consolidated; and d) items were added. A final draft of the document was then prepared and included 45 indicators/experiences. This draft was then reviewed by classroom teachers and additional wording changes were made. As a result of feedback from the advisory board and the classroom teachers, an introduction to the document was developed. The purpose of this introduction was to provide a rationale for the document and a clear explanation of the purposes of the document. A copy of the document and the introduction is included in Appendix D.

Focus Group Process and Results

A series of focus groups was conducted as strategy for reaching consensus on key indicators/experiences associated with readiness for kindergarten. Faculty on the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project (KPEP) developed a consensus methodology that was used to conduct the focus groups. This methodology was reviewed by the Kentucky Department of Education prior to its implementation. Six focus groups were conducted across the state, one in

each of four RTC regions and two in the remaining RTC region. Staff from each RTC served as facilitators and identified a colleague in their region to assist with the facilitation. The facilitators were trained by KPEP faculty prior to the focus groups. In addition, KPEP Staff attended each focus group. Preschool teachers, primary teachers, child care providers, Head Start personnel, administrators, staff from the Kentucky Department of Education, early intervention personnel, and parents were invited to attend the focus groups. Attempts were made to invite a diverse group of individuals including: a) ethnical and cultural diversity; b) professional diversity (e.g., professionals who have experience with children with disabilities, children who are at-risk), and c) gender. A total of 168 individuals including four people who identified themselves as parents participated in the focus groups. Across groups, the number of participants ranged from 10 to 41 with a mean of 28. Of the 168 participants, 133 had teaching experience in preschool programs, 81 had teaching experience in kindergarten programs, and 73 had teaching experience in k-3.

The following set of procedures was used to conduct each of the focus groups described above:

a. The facilitator welcomed the participants and explained the process that was used.
b. Each participant was given a hard copy of the list of indicators/experiences and asked to read the list and write directly on the paper (See Appendix D). Each participant was asked to independently rate each item (i.e., represents a key experience or indicator that should be included, undecided, or that should not be included). Further, each person was asked to make comments about improvements in wording or structure of any of the items (i.e., decision-making criteria).
c. The next step involved a guided discussion. Group rules related to respect and sensitivity to the opinions of others as well as the process that was to be used was explained prior to beginning this discussion. The discussion involved generating a list of guidelines that was used in deciding whether or not specific items should be included.
d. After this discussion, each participant was asked to participate in a group process. All indicators/experiences were listed on chart paper around the room. Each participant was asked to place a dot (color coded based on ratings) next to each indicator/experience reflecting the rating they wanted to give the item. These ratings may have changed based on the group discussion. Items that received all green dots (i.e., should be included) were included in the document from that group. Items that received all red dots (i.e., should not be included) were eliminated. All other items formed the basis for the following discussion. The participants were reminded that the list of indicators/experiences from which this work was done was generated using the professional literature, work from other states, and recommendations from professional organizations. Items that were not supported across multiple sources had been excluded. Thus, it was likely that there would be a high level of agreement about many of the items.

e. The facilitator then guided the discussion focusing on each item for which there was not consensus. Individuals who rated the item differently than the majority of the group were asked to provide some reasons for their decision. Following this discussion, participants were given an opportunity to change their vote. Ultimately, items were included or eliminated using a majority vote.

f. The process concluded with a discussion of the process and feedback about how the participants felt about the process. This was critical to ensuring stakeholder "buy-in" of the final product.

Each focus group resulted in recommendations about the inclusion or exclusion of each indicator/experience which was determined based on the group voting process. When the ratings were summarized across groups, 42 items were recommended to be included with the remaining three items being rated by a majority of the participants for "inclusion" or indicating they were unsure. No items were recommended to be excluded.

Key issues raised during the focus groups were used to revise the format and introduction to the document. These issues dealt primarily with the purpose of the document and how it would be used. Participants felt strongly that this should not be used to determine whether children could go to kindergarten or to evaluate teachers. Participants indicated that they did not want this to be a checklist of child skills. Across groups, participants indicated that they supported its use if it was used primarily to guide curriculum. This feedback was used to develop the format for the final document.

Development of the Final Document

Following the six focus group meetings, the facilitators met as a group with the KPEP staff to review the summary of findings across groups and to make recommendations for the final document. At least one person from each focus group participated in this meeting. Three steps were used to develop the final document: a) the summary data were presented by KPEP staff; b) the three items that did not receive a majority vote for inclusion were reviewed; c) additional items were generated; and d) consensus was reached on a format for the document.

The items that did not receive a majority vote for inclusion are were reviewed by the facilitator group and were either revised, merged with other items, or removed based on the facilitators' reports of their group discussions. A list of additional items that had been recommended by focus group participants was reviewed. Additional items were generated to address missing indicators (e.g., large motor skills). The final discussion item related to the format of the document. The facilitators reiterated the participants' concerns about how this document could potentially be used. They indicated that the format of the document would be important in communicating how it should be used.

Following this meeting, Project staff revised the document both in terms of the content changes and the format changes. It was then sent to the facilitators for a final review. A copy of the final document is included in Appendix E.

Summary and Recommendations

Based on feedback from participants and feedback from facilitators, we would like to make the following recommendations:

a. Different versions of this document should be produced for different audiences (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators);
b. The document could be expanded to be a self assessment instrument for teachers with a preface to each item that says "I provide opportunities for children to...";
c. Examples of how these opportunities could be provided at home and in the classroom could be generated and included with the document;
d. The Kentucky Department of Education should develop a comprehensive plan for disseminating this information that clearly articulates the purposes and the appropriate uses of the document.

This study provides the foundation for further exploration of the relationship between preschool and primary programs. The indicators and experiences identified above could be used for a variety of purposes including: a) aligning preschool and primary curriculum in order to support children's transition to the primary program; b) guiding the professional development needs of both preschool and kindergarten teachers; and c) investigating program features that promote children's development and successful transition to kindergarten.

Question 3

Methods

What are the barriers to participation in the Kentucky Preschool Program? What, if any, other programs do eligible children attend in place of the Preschool Program? The data from this study will provide information on changes in the Preschool Program that might make it more useful or accessible to children and families in Kentucky.

Subjects

During each of the last three years of the project, we studied three groups of children as they entered kindergarten: a) children who were eligible for but who did not attend the Preschool Program the previous year (eligible nonparticipants); b) children who were eligible for and who did attend the Preschool Program the previous year (eligible participants); and c) children who were not eligible for the Preschool Program the previous year. Children from the eligible participant group and eligible nonparticipant groups served as the subjects for this study.

Procedures

This study involved three primary steps: a) development of the survey; b) locating the children who served as subjects; and c) collecting information from their parents on reasons why they did or did not attend the Preschool Program.

In order to locate the children, the process that had been used during the previous seven years of the project was used. This process involved sending locator sheets to the school system that

children had attended the previous year and following up with a series of phone calls to the school systems as necessary.

Once the children were located, surveys were sent to the school to be sent home with the child. The surveys asked parents to indicate why their child did or did not attend the Preschool Program and what other program they attended, if any (See Appendix F for a copy of the surveys). The survey provided them options they could check (e.g., did not know about the program, needed full-day program, chose to keep my child at home) as well as a place where they could write additional information. A cover letter explained that the purpose of the survey was to obtain information that would be used to make decisions about how the program could be modified or enhanced to better meet the needs of families. A self-addressed stamped envelope was enclosed. Two weeks after the surveys were sent home, a reminder was sent to all families who had not responded. Phone calls were made to families who did not respond after the reminder. In addition, teachers were asked to assist in getting the information from parents who did not respond. This multi-step process is consistent with recommended practices in survey research (Bourque & Fielder, 1995).

Three primary steps were used in developing the surveys. First, the initial items were drafted by the KPEP staff using the professional literature, data from previous years of this project, and information obtained from interviews with parents, preschool administrators and teachers. The second step involved a review of the surveys by parents, administrators and teachers. Based on this review, some items were added, some items were deleted, and some items were reworded for the purpose of clarification. Finally, the surveys were then sent to the KPEP Technical Advisory Group and Kentucky Department of Education personnel for review. Again, the surveys were revised based on this input.

Results

A total of 194 surveys were returned. This included 120 surveys from parents whose children had attended the Preschool Programs and 74 from parents whose children were eligible for but who did not attend the Preschool program.

Table 1 provides summary data from the parents of children who attended the Preschool Program indicating why they chose to send their children to the Program. This survey included 21 potential reasons why parents might choose to send their children to the Program. Parents could check as many choices as were applicable to their situation. Overall, the most consistent reason parents chose to send their children to the Program related to the benefits of the program for their children. In fact, the five highest responses all related to the benefits of the program for the children: the program would benefit my child, the program would prepare my child for kindergarten, my child would learn new things, my child would be with other children, and my child would learn numbers, letters and how to read. These items account for over half of all responses on the survey. Another 20% of the responses identified logistics of the program as

reasons why parents chose to send their children to the Program (e.g., location, availability of after school care, transportation).

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Parent Responses (n=120) About Why they Chose to Send their Child to the Preschool Program

I sent my child to the Kentucky Preschool Program because:	Frequency	Percent
I thought the program would benefit my child.	116	97%
I felt the program would prepare my child for kindergarten.	115	96%
I wanted my child to learn new things.	112	93%
I wanted my child to be with other children.	105	88%
I wanted my child to learn numbers and the alphabet, and how to read.	99	83%
I liked that the program included children with and without disabilities.	74	62%
The program was free.	71	59%
The program was close to my home.	61	51%
The program provided transportation.	44	37%
I wanted my child to get the Special Education Services at the preschool.	42	35%
My older child(ren) was in the program.	35	29%
The preschool has parent education and training opportunities.	28	23%
I knew the person who would be my child's teacher.	28	23%
I knew someone whose child was also in the program.	28	23%
I wanted to send my child to a preschool that met for a full day.	25	21%
I wanted to get to know other parents.	20	17%
A friend recommended the program to me.	15	13%
I was contacted/recruited by the staff.	15	13%
The staff at the preschool was bilingual.	11	9%
I have a friend or relative who works or volunteers at the school.	11	9%
After school care was available.	7	6%

Table 2 provides summary data from the parents of children who did not attend the Preschool Program indicating why they chose not to send their children to the Program. This survey included 11 reasons why parents might choose not to send their children to the Program. Parents could check as many choices as were applicable to their situation and could write additional comments as needed. They were also asked to provide information on other childcare arrangements. Table 2 provides a summary of the reasons parents gave for choosing not to send their child to the Preschool Program. The majority of the responses fell into one of two categories: a) parents felt their children were too young to go to school, and b) parents wanted to keep their children at home with them. For example, one parent said "I think four years old is just too young. When they do start school, it just seems like home life takes second place".

Another parent said "I want to have my child at home with me as long as possible". Another factor related to a lack of awareness or knowledge about the program. A fourth of the responses reflected a lack of knowledge about some aspect of the program: a) I did not know the program existed), b) I did not know the program would provide transportation, c) I did not know my child could attend the program, and d) I did not know if the program would benefit my child. Finally, 13% of the responses related to logistics about the program that did not work for the family (e.g., needed full day care, beginning/ending times did not work for family/child, program was too far away from home). These issues were reflected in comments such as "I worked 12 hours shifts and needed care for my child for 12 hours".

These parents were also asked to indicate what other child care arrangements they used in place of the Preschool Program. These responses were quite varied and included such things as: a) Head Start, b) relatives, c) keeping the child at home with the parent, and d) other community childcare programs. Head Start was listed as the most common arrangement.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Parent Responses (n=74) About Why they Chose Not to Send their Child to the Preschool Program

My child did not attend the Kentucky Preschool Program because:	Frequency	Percent
I thought 4 years old was too young to go to school.	31	42%
I preferred to take care of my child at home.	23	31%
I needed care all day long for my child and the program was only 1/2 day.	10	14%
I did not know that the Preschool Program existed.	8	11%
I did not know that the school would provide transportation.	8	11%
I did not want to put my child on a bus.	8	11%
I did not know that my child could attend.	7	9%
I did not know if the program would benefit my child.	4	5%
The starting/ending time of the program was not good for my child/ family.	3	4%
I thought the program was too far away from home.	1	1%
English is our second language.	1	1%

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, parents of eligible children who chose to send their children to the Kentucky Preschool Program did so because they perceived that the program would benefit their child and because the program worked for their family logistically (e.g., location, transportation). The parents of eligible children who chose not to send their children to the Preschool Program made that choice primarily because they either thought their child was too young for school or they

preferred to keep their child at home. Some of these parents also identified a lack of knowledge about the program and logistical issues as other reasons why their child did not attend the Program.

For parents who did not send their children to the Preschool Program and who did not keep their children at home with them, the most common alternative was Head Start. The Kentucky Preschool Program appears to be doing an excellent job of locating eligible children and getting information about the Program to their parents. Dissemination of information about the appropriateness of the program for young children and the benefits of the program for children, as well as a consideration of logistical changes might further increase the number of eligible children who attend the Kentucky Preschool Program.

Study 2: Facilitating and Supporting Children's Language Development at Home and in the Classroom

Language involves a shared set of symbols and experiences that assist us in internalizing thoughts and ideas and expressing our thoughts to others (Wishon, Brazee, & Eller, 1986; Bloom & Lahey, 1978). Language involves four modes of communication: speaking, listening, reading and writing (Spodek & Saracho, 1994). Language development begins in the first few months of life when infants begin making sounds, responding to facial expressions and listening to different voices. Language development proceeds as children begin taking turns in interactions with familiar caregivers and move from primarily responding to taking a more active role in initiating interactions (MacDonald, 1990). Children begin to connect symbols to meanings, a critical step in literacy development. Children's language development is highly dependent on the people around them and the kind of input that they get. One of the most critical developmental milestones related to language and literacy is vocabulary development. Children who hear more language develop a more diverse vocabulary and more complex language than children who are talked to less frequently (Hart & Risley, 1995). Preschool children's vocabulary development as well as other language skills are facilitated through interacting with people, listening to stories and songs, telling stories, exploring a well-designed environment, and experimenting with written language.

The relationship between early language development and formal literacy skills such as reading is clearly documented in the professional literature. In fact, the relationship reflects a continuum related to the four modes of communication (i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing) as well as different levels of complexity for each mode. Children's ability to learn to read depends on their general cognitive abilities as well as their ability to understand the structure of spoken words. Snow, Burns, and Griffen (1998) identified three key stumbling blocks to children's ability to learn to read: a) difficulty understanding that written spellings systematically represent spoken words; b) the failure to transfer comprehension skills to reading, and c) the absence or loss of motivation to read. Children who have deficits in these areas are likely to have difficulties learning to read. In order for children to be successful in school, it is critical that children enter kindergarten with the prerequisite language skills and with a motivation to read. Tests of early language development measure the types of expressive and receptive language skills that are considered to be necessary prerequisites to literacy development.

Children are exposed to different amounts and types of language input (Hart & Risley, 1995) as a result of different family compositions, different experiences, and different backgrounds. Children's exposure to language is also affected differently based on their childcare arrangement. All of this suggests that there is no one right teaching strategy. Different children will require that teachers use different types and intensities of language facilitation strategies. Good teachers use a variety of strategies that are tailored to meet the needs of individual children (International

Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998). However, there probably is a common set of strategies and environmental arrangements and factors from which teachers should make choices. Teachers have to be trained not only to know this set of strategies but to understand how to adapt them to meet the differing needs of individual children.

This study was conducted for two primary reasons. First, over the course of the last seven years of the Kentucky Preschool Program Third Party Evaluation, we have found that language is one of the areas in which children make the least amount of progress during their preschool year. Given that the majority of children with disabilities being served by the Preschool Program have a language delay and that language delays are common in the population of at-risk children being served by the Program, professional development activities must focus on facilitating language and literacy skills. Second, the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project Advisory Board identified this as a primary concern. Their concern related specifically to the lack of progress that children were making in speech and language development and more generally to the assumption that children's early language development is likely to predict later success in the area of literacy development. The advisory board also recognized the critical role of parents in supporting children's development at home. Thus, this study will focus both on the implementation of recommended practices in the classroom and the role of the classroom teacher in supporting parents' implementation of these practices in the home.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to develop a set of professional development recommendations for teachers related to strategies for facilitating and supporting children's language and literacy development in the classroom and supporting family's use of the strategies at home. Specifically, this study had three key objectives:

a) a review of the research literature as well as concept papers and recommended practices documents from relevant professional organizations for the purpose of identifying recommended practices related to facilitating children's language and literacy development at home and in the classroom;
b) an analysis of the extent to which the Kentucky Preschool Programs are implementing these recommended practices;
c) a set of recommendations about professional development needs of teachers in the Kentucky Preschool Programs related to facilitating and supporting children's language development at home and in the classroom.

Each of the objectives described above was addressed using different methods. Thus, this section is divided into three sub sections, one for each of the objectives.

Objective 1: Recommended Practices Observation Instruments and Surveys

In order to document what Early Childhood educators and parents can do to support children's language development, a review of research and practice was conducted. The research

literature on children's language development as well as concept papers and recommended practices documents from major professional associations and academies (e.g., NAEYC, DEC, National Academy of Sciences) were reviewed. In addition, existing instruments related to language and literacy practices were reviewed. Information from this effort was used to identify a set of quality indicators. Subsequently, the quality indicators were used to create a Recommended Practices Checklist (See Appendix G) and a set of surveys that were sent to parents and teachers (See Appendix H). While an attempt was made to categorize the practices by the intended function or outcome of the practice, issues related to the ease of observation (for the checklist) or ease with which they could be understood by the reader (for the surveys) were also considered. The checklist included 51 items that were grouped into four categories: book reading (12 items), teacher-child interaction (12 items), literacy instruction (16 items), and environment (11 items). The scoring system for the checklist primarily involved indicating that a practice occurred, did not occur or was not applicable. This scoring system was used because it was to be scored based on a one-day observation. Therefore it was not possible to rate the frequency with which teachers used the practices.

The teacher survey had four components that are parallel to those included on the checklist described above (classroom environment, book reading, teacher-child interactions, and literacy instruction). The teacher survey had 40 items and used a three point rating scale which reflected the frequency with which they implemented the practices. Finally, a survey for parents was developed. The 28 items on the parent survey were grouped into three categories: a) home literacy practices, b) literacy activities provided by the school, and c) literacy activities in the child's classroom. All three of these categories were needed in order to understand the relationship between home literacy practices and school practices.

An initial draft of each of these instruments was developed as described above using the professional literature as a foundation. Five preschool teachers reviewed the initial draft of each instrument. Based on their feedback, the instruments were revised. The instruments were then sent to the KPEP Technical Advisory Group for review. Again, revisions were made based on the feedback provided by these individuals.

Objective 2: Implementation

The second objective was to evaluate the extent to which these recommended practices were being implemented in the Kentucky Preschool Programs by teachers and the extent to which parents were using these practices at home. Toward this end, we implemented five strategies: 1) a secondary analysis of the projects' existing data base, 2) classroom observations, 3) a survey of parents regarding home practices, 4) a survey of teachers regarding their use of the recommended practices, and 5) interviews with five parents and five teachers regarding the issues identified above. In the following section, the methods and results for each strategy will be described.

2A. Secondary data analysis. A careful reanalysis of the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation Project (KPEP) data from the past seven years was conducted. Data related to language and literacy development were obtained from the following sources: a) Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), b) the Battelle Developmental Inventory, and c) early literacy measures. Summary information about these data are presented below. More complete analyses of the data are included in annual reports from the KPEP and are available from the Kentucky Department of Education. These data will be reported in two sections. The first section will provide summary information about the language and literacy activities in the preschool classrooms. The second section will provide information on children's language development prior to, during and following their participation in the Kentucky Preschool Program.

Classroom Activities Related to Language and Literacy. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale was administered during three years of the KPEP study (1992, 1994, 1996). In addition, the Configuration Map for Preschool Programs was administered. These data provide some initial information on the types of language and literacy activities that are occurring in the Kentucky Preschool Program Classrooms.

- Classrooms were rated above average on language and reasoning activities. Out of seven possible points, the mean score across 124 classrooms was 5.1. This indicates that teachers were implementing activities designed to promote children's receptive and expressive communication skills. In addition, they were having conversations with children throughout the day.
- Teachers rarely used language facilitation strategies to build on children's current knowledge and experiences, and rarely used questions that prompted children to use higher level thinking skills.
- Classrooms scored slightly below average (i.e., 4) on other language related items including: a) child-related displays (3.8), b) dramatic play (3.9), and c) cultural awareness (3.1).

Children's Language Development. Children's language development was measured at three points in time: a) at the beginning of their year in the Kentucky Preschool Program; b) at the end of their year in the Kentucky Preschool Program; and c) as they entered Kindergarten. The Battelle Developmental Inventory and tests of early literacy development were administered at the beginning and end of preschool and the Preschool Language Scale was administered at the beginning of kindergarten. These data were collected during six years of the study and thus, include six cohorts of children. The following data provide summary information on children's language and literacy development while they were in the Kentucky Preschool Programs and as they transitioned into Kindergarten:

- Children entered preschool behind age level in both receptive and expressive communication. This was true for at-risk children as well as children with disabilities, and

this pattern was observed consistently across the six cohorts of children. For example, the average delay in receptive communication across groups of children was 12.4 months and the average expressive delay was 8 months. Receptive communication includes skills such as following directions, responding to "wh" questions, discriminating between real words and nonsense words, and understanding plural forms of words. Expressive communication skills include labeling objects, asking questions, communicating effectively, and relating one's experiences.

- For four of the six groups of children, receptive communication skills were more delayed than skills in any other developmental area.
- Children made significant progress in both receptive and expressive communication skills during the year they were in preschool. However, children's gains in expressive communication were below what would be expected based on the length of time that they were in the program.
- Children's gains in receptive and expressive communication were lower than their gains in other developmental areas.
- Children with disabilities made more significant gains in expressive and receptive communication than did at-risk children.
- At-risk children and children with disabilities (except those with severe disabilities) made significant gains on early literacy measures during the year they were in preschool.
- Twenty percent of at-risk children had delays in auditory comprehension as they entered kindergarten. One fourth of the children in the at-risk group demonstrated delays in expressive communication as they entered kindergarten.

It is important to note that the data summarized above were collected from 1991-1997. This was prior to the recent federal and state funding for literacy activities. Overall these data suggest that there should be a focus on language development in preschool classrooms. While teachers are aware of this need and provide language and literacy activities, there needs to be an increased emphasis on promoting the development of more complex language skills and individualizing activities and strategies to meet the needs of all children.

2B. Classroom observations and Teacher Surveys. Classroom observations were conducted in 23 of the 24 sites that had participated most recently in the ongoing KPEP study. These classrooms had been randomly selected and represented 21 school districts which were distributed across the state and represented a range of income levels, district size, and locations. Observations were used to gather descriptive information and to assess classroom implementation of the recommended practices for supporting children's language development in the classroom (which was based on objective 1 described above). Project staff conducted the classroom observations. Before beginning the observations, the staff conducted practice observations at a local child care center for the purpose of establishing reliability across observers. Disagreements were discussed and additional observations were conducted to correct

the disagreements. Once the observers were reliable, they began observing in the classrooms that were used for data collection purposes. Half-day classes were observed for the entire class period while full-day classes were typically observed for four hours. The number of children in the classrooms ranged from 12 to 30 with an average of 17.

In addition to observing teachers' classroom practices, we asked teachers to complete a survey describing their practices. Teachers from the 23 participating sites completed the survey on language and literacy practices. The survey asked teachers to rate the frequency with which they used the recommended practices. With a few exceptions, the items on the teacher survey were parallel to the items on the classroom observation instrument described above. However there were some differences in the way the items were organized which reflected the way the two instruments were being used.

The observational and survey data are presented in a series of tables in this section. In some cases, the tables include an "na" which indicates that that item is not applicable either because it was not included on the teacher survey or the way it was asked was too different from the parallel item on the observation checklist to allow a meaningful comparison. Table 3 provides an overview of the data collected on the classroom environment during the observations and the related information from the teacher surveys. Overall, the classrooms were observed to be supportive of children's language and literacy development. Tables and chairs were the appropriate size for writing activities, developmentally appropriate activities that promote learning related to sounds and letters were available, and a variety of writing utensils were available in most classes. A primary area of concern related to the classroom environment was the availability of relevant books and literacy activities throughout the classroom. Only one third of the classrooms had these types of materials and activities distributed throughout the classroom. What we observed most frequently was that books were kept in the book/reading/listening center and writing, painting and drawing instruments were primarily kept in the art center.

In response to the items about the classroom environment on the teacher survey, all of the teachers indicated that their classrooms were organized with thematic and dramatic play settings which contained opportunities for reading and writing, that a variety of writing instruments and materials were available for children to use, and that tables and chairs were the appropriate size for writing. The majority of the teachers also indicated that *big books* were available for the children to use and that appropriate books were available throughout the classroom. There were two primary differences between the teacher reports and the observational data. First, the observational data indicated that a third of the teachers did not have their rooms organized as described above. Second, only one third of the classrooms were observed to have books available throughout the classroom.

Table 3

Classroom Observations: The Environment

Environment	Observation 1	Observation 2
Tables and chairs are the appropriate size to facilitate writing activities.	100%	100%
Nonfiction books are available for children to read.	96%	na
Early literacy computer programs are in the classroom.	91%	na
A variety of writing instruments is available and children are encouraged to use them	91%	100%
Activities that promote learning the names of letters are present.	87%	100%
Big books are available.	70%	91%
Activities that promote connecting letter sounds to letters names are present.	70%	na
The classroom is organized with thematic and dramatic play settings which contain opportunities for reading and writing.	65%	100%
Activities that promote learning sounds are present.	57%	na
The school embraces a building-wide emphasis on reading.	52%	100%
Appropriate books are available in various areas of the classroom.	35%	87%

The findings related to book reading are presented in Table 4. The observational data indicate that he majority of the teachers read to the class, used expression and read at an appropriate speed for the children in that class. While almost all of the teachers were observed reading to the whole class of children, only 26% of the teachers were observed reading to small groups of children. The majority of the teachers had some type of follow-up activity related to the story that was read. However, the extent to which teachers used storybook reading as an opportunity to facilitate higher level skills varied greatly. For example, while two thirds of the teachers asked questions that related the stories to the children's experiences, less than half of the teachers asked predictive questions, asked children to analyze the characters' motivations, or encouraged the children to use their imaginations. Overall, the observations indicated that most teachers read to their class as a whole and provided follow-up activities related to the stories. However, the extent to which teachers used stories to build higher level thinking skills varies greatly.

The teacher survey data reflect the observational data on a number of items including reading aloud to the class and providing follow-up activities. However, there are several practices that teachers reported using at a higher frequency than they were observed. These included asking questions that relate to the children's experiences, discussing word meanings, asking predictive questions, and encouraging children to use their imaginations. It is possible that the teachers simply did not use the strategies on the day of the observation. However, given the critical

nature of these strategies and their impact on literacy development, they should be used frequently and on a daily basis.

Table 4
Classroom Observations: Book Reading

Book Reading	Observation	Survey
Reads at an appropriate speed for the children in the class.	96%	na
Reads with expression.	96%	na
Reads aloud to the whole class.	87%	100%
Reads a favorite book more than once.	83%	na
Provides follow-up activities after reading a book.	74%	74%
Ask questions which relate the stories to children's experiences.	65%	91%
Discusses word meanings.	57%	83%
Allows children to choose their own stories/books.	43%	65%
Asks predictive questions.	43%	96%
Asks children to analyze characters' motivations.	43%	61%
Encourages children to use their imagination during story discussions.	30%	83%
Reads aloud to small groups.	26%	65%

Table 5 provides an overview of the data collected on teacher child interactions using both observation and surveys. The observational data suggest that most teachers are interacting with children in ways that promote their literacy and language development. For example, most of the teachers we observed varied the amount of help they gave individual children based on their needs, carried on meaningful conversations with children, and linked what the children already knew with new conversations. However, there were two alarming findings in these data. First, only 48% of the teachers checked to make sure that children understood the activities and only 26% of the teachers demonstrated or modeled activities. Children's ability to follow the class routine and to participate meaningfully in class activities requires that they understand the routine, activities and expectations. One of the most common causes of children's challenging behaviors is a lack of understanding about these issues. Second, only a fourth of the teachers extended children's play. In fact, what we observed most often was that most teachers rarely interacted with children during play other than to give directions or instructions.

The relationship between the survey and observational data on teacher child interactions is consistent with the pattern noted in the previous two sections. On some items, the survey data confirm the findings of the observational data (e.g., varying amount of help, linking what the child already knows to new concepts). However, there are several areas on the survey where teachers report using strategies more frequently than was observed. The most striking differences were on the following items: checking to ensure children understand, encouraging children to solve problems independently, and extending children's play.

Table 5

Classroom Observations: Teacher Child Interactions

Teacher-Child Interaction	Observation	Survey
Varies amount of help to meet the children's individual needs.	87%	100%
Carries on reciprocal conversations with children.	70%	96%
Links what the child already knows with new concepts.	70%	87%
Encourages children to work on their own.	65%	na
Carries on meaningful conversations during small group activities.	65%	91%
Carries on meaningful conversations with individual children.	65%	70%
Checks to ensure that children understand the explanation of activities.	48%	96%
Encourages children to solve problems independently.	26%	87%
Demonstrates or models activities.	26%	83%
Extends children's play.	13%	87%

Table 6 provides an overview of the types of literacy instruction and activities that were observed in the 23 classrooms and the related teacher survey data. At least 70% of the teachers were observed providing positive and individualized feedback to children about literacy activities, provided written labels in the classroom, and promoted learning letter names. However, less than half of the teachers provided more complex types of literacy instruction or opportunities such as listening activities, encouraging children to talk about their work, and writing messages and reading them to children. A primary concern about literacy instruction in these classrooms is that while there were activities and opportunities to work on naming letters in most classrooms (70%), opportunities for learning about letter sounds and connecting the sounds to the letters were observed in less than half of the classrooms. Current research on phonemic awareness would suggest the need for more activities that promote learning about the relationship between letters and sounds. The primary discrepancies between the observational data and the survey data were related to teaching letters and sounds and supporting children's understanding of written language.

Table 6

Classroom Observations: Literacy Instruction

Literacy Instruction	Observation	Survey
Provides positive feedback during literacy activities.	96%	87%
Provides individualized instruction during literacy activities.	87%	83%
Demonstrates that words convey meaningful messages.	83%	56%
Provides written labels of items in the classroom.	78%	74%
Provides activities for learning the names of letters.	70%	100%
Uses finger plays.	70%	70%
Children read story books with picture cues.	52%	100%
Promotes learning sounds.	48%	100%
Promotes connecting letter sounds to letter names.	43%	100%
Encourages children to tell about their pictures or work.	39%	61%
Encourages children to write words, if they show an interest.	35%	56%
Writes messages and reads them to children.	26%	35%
Encourages listening activities which assist children in understanding the structure of spoken words	22%	65%
Reads nursery rhymes or other poems.	22%	13%
Encourages children to do journal entries w/pictures & talk about them.	22%	9%
Uses play to foster meaningful understanding of print.	9%	48%

Across all areas, there were differences between observational data and teacher survey data such as those described above. There are several possible reasons for the discrepancies. First, it might be the case that the one-day observations missed many of the things that the teachers reported that they did. Second, the expectations of the observers might have been different than the teachers' expectations. For example, the teachers might have indicated that books were available throughout the room if they were available in more than one place whereas the observers were expecting books to be available in a variety of places. Third, the teachers might not have understood what the question on the survey was asking.

These data provide some important information for understanding the professional needs of teachers. First, both the observational data and the survey data clearly document that teachers are implementing many of the recommended literacy practices. This suggests that the majority of teachers have the foundation needed for implementing more complex and consistent practices. Second, based on the data, it is clear that there is a gap between ideal practice (that which is described in the professional literature) and actual practice (that which teachers report that they do). While it is important to be realistic in terms of understanding the barriers to the implementation of ideal practices, it is also important to understand that ideal practices are related to more positive child outcomes. Thus, it should be the goal of all professional

development activities to provide ongoing support to teachers as they move toward ideal practices. Third, the discrepancies between observations and surveys suggest that in many cases teachers think they are doing things that they may not be doing systematically. In order to assist teachers in being more systematic about their use of language and literacy practices, they must be involved in an evaluation of their practices in collaboration with another professional.

2C. Parent survey. Parents of the children in the 23 participating classrooms were asked to complete a survey. A multistep process was used to ensure a high return rate. This process included multiple notices to the families and the use of an incentive (t-shirt). A total of 243 surveys were returned for a return rate of 62%. This return rate is considered to be above average in the survey literature.

Data on home literacy activities as reported by parents are presented in Table 7. More than 70% of the parents who responded to this survey indicated that they participate in the following activities with their child: reading books, naming objects, readings signs and labels, and helping their children write letters and words. The activities in which fewer parents report participating are those activities which help children understand the different purposes of written language. For example, less than a fourth of the parents reported writing down their children's stories or information about their work. These findings are consistent with some of the findings about classroom practices and suggest that this is an important area for professional development.

Table 7

Parent Survey: Home Literacy Activities

Home Literacy Activities	
Reading story books.	95%
Naming objects or places outside the home	88%
Reading signs and labels on household items.	78%
Helping your child write letters.	74%
Helping your child write words.	73%
Listening to your child "read" books to you.	56%
Reading "fact" books.	46%
Reading comic books and/or the Sunday funnies.	28%
Writing titles and/or descriptions of your child's artwork.	24%
Writing down your child's stories.	10%
Other.	8%

One of the ways in which teachers can help parents implement recommended literacy practices in the home is to ensure that they are aware of recommended literacy practices and ways in which they are implemented in the child's classroom. Parents were asked to indicate whether or not the following practices were implemented in their child's classroom. They were

also given an opportunity to indicate that they did not know if the practices were implemented. The data from the parent survey (see Table 8) show that parents report many classroom practices to be occurring more frequently than the observations or teacher surveys indicated. Overall, the parents report that a majority of the practices included on the survey are happening in their child's classrooms. There also appears to be some relationship between what parents report doing at home and what they report is going on in their children's classroom suggesting that parents may be more likely to do those things at home that they think are occurring in their child's classroom.

Table 8

Parent Survey: Parents' Knowledge about Literacy Practices in their Children's Classrooms

Classroom Literacy Practices	
Reads stories to the class.	95%
Provides activities that promote learning letter names.	93%
Reads nursery rhymes or other poems.	88%
Encourages children to use their imagination during story time.	86%
Uses finger plays.	86%
Provides activities the promote learning the sounds of letters.	85%
Provides written labels of items in the classroom.	84%
Provides activities that connect the sounds of letters to letter names.	84%
Checks to make sure that children understand the explanation of activities.	81%
Encourages children to write letters and/or words.	81%
Discusses word meanings.	78%
Asks questions which relate to child's experiences.	77%
Allows children to choose their own stories/books.	72%
Encourages children to talk about pictures and writes key words on children's pictures.	69%
Uses play to help children understand printed word.	65%
Encourages children to write or draw in journals and talk about their entries.	49%

2D. Parent and Teacher Interviews. One parent and one teacher from five of the 23 sites were selected for interviews. Selections were made based on geographic area of the state, geographic area of the school setting, and the literacy observations. Attempts were made to select sites that represented the range of possible options associated with each of these factors. The sites included two in central Kentucky, and one in the southwestern part of the state, one in western Kentucky, and one in eastern Kentucky. Three sites were in rural areas, one was in an urban area and one was in a suburban area. The interviews were conducted by KPEP staff and

were tape-recorded. Teachers were asked questions about their strengths and needs in the area of literacy, activities that support parents' use of the practices, effective classroom practices, and possible professional development topics. Parents were asked questions about their use of literacy practices at home, how their child's teacher could support their use of the literacy practices, and literacy practices in their child's classrooms.

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed into categories of responses. This resulted in the identification of one dominant theme and four additional themes. The dominant theme and the theme that was addressed by almost every interviewee related to the importance of reading to children on a regular and frequent basis. In addition, both teachers and parents stressed the importance of follow-up, hands-on activities (e.g., puppets, drama activities, flannel board stories, and finger plays) related to the characters and subjects of the stories. Teachers also talked about the importance of transcribing children's stories and exposing them to meaningful print. Finally, teachers talked about the need for giving parents hands-on activities to do at home with their children. Teachers indicated that while they knew the importance of providing families with information on language and literacy development, they felt that this was an area in which they could be doing more.

Two of the themes were discussed primarily by parents: the importance of individualized interactions with children and the role of language in children's ability to express themselves. Parents talked about the importance of finding some one-on-one time each day to read to and talk to their children. They mentioned home visits as a way of getting ideas for promoting their children's language and literacy skills. Parents also identified expressive language as a primary concern. They talked both about the progress their children had made in expressive language and their children's needs related to expressive language. They wanted their children to be able to use language for things like expressing their wants and needs, using their imagination, and communicating clearly.

The final two themes were discussed by both parents and teachers. Both acknowledged the role that technology, primarily computers, could play in children's language and literacy development. Technology was viewed by parents and teachers as both a strength and an area of need. Parents felt that computers really helped their children in the area of language and literacy. Teachers recognized the importance of computers but also raised concerns such as: a) wanting to know more about how to use the computer, beyond just playing games, to promote language and literacy, and b) needing more information on identifying and selecting appropriate software. Finally, both parents and teachers identified writing as an area of need. Teachers discussed their concern about whether preschool children had the fine motor skills to manage writing utensils and also indicated a need for more information on developmentally appropriate writing activities. One teacher suggested the need for professional development related to "effective journal writing strategies for young children". Parents were concerned that their children were not interested in writing.

Objective 3: Professional Development Recommendations

As a result of the data analysis, classroom observations, parent and teacher surveys, and parent and teacher interviews, a number of professional development needs were identified. This section will provide recommendations related to meeting the professional development needs of teachers related to language and literacy development and supporting parents' use of language and literacy strategies at home. This section will be divided into two primary sections. The first section will provide a summary of the professional development needs that were identified above. The second section will provide recommendations for how these professional development needs can be met such that meaningful change in teaching practices occurs.

Professional Development Needs. The professional development needs described below were identified through observations, interviews, surveys, and/or the professional literature. It is important to note that many strengths were observed in terms of teachers' use of language and literacy strategies. These strengths will provide the foundation upon which teachers can develop a wider repertoire of strategies for supporting children's language and literacy development. The professional development needs will be described in terms of topics that professional development activities should address:

- Creating a classroom environment that promotes children's language and literacy development. This should focus primarily on ensuring that language and literacy materials (e.g., books, writing utensils, print) are located throughout the classroom such that opportunities for literacy development are integrated across classroom activities, and using thematic units and dramatic play activities.
- Using facilitation strategies that promote the development of higher order thinking skills. These strategies should include asking predictive questions about stories or events, asking children to analyze the motivations of characters in stories, encouraging children to use their imagination, extending children's play, and prompting children to talk about their work and/or play.
- Using strategies to ensure that children understand expectations about classroom rules, activities, and directions. These strategies could include modeling or role playing activities, encouraging children to work together to accomplish tasks, and talking directly to children about expectations.
- Individualizing activities and expectations to meet the unique needs of all children in the classroom. Given the wide range of children being served in the preschool programs, it is likely that some children will be working on basic communication skills while other children will be working on higher level thinking skills. Professional development should focus on strategies that teachers can use to meet the range of needs within the context of ongoing classroom activities.
- Ensuring that meaningful language and literacy activities occur in the classroom. For example, the data summarized above indicate that teachers provide developmentally

appropriate activities in which children learn to name letters but teachers are less likely to provide opportunities for children to learn the relationship between sounds and letters. Teachers also indicated professional development needs related to implementing developmentally appropriate activities related to teaching children about written language.

- Using a variety of tools to facilitate children's language and literacy development. One of the specific areas teachers mentioned was technology. Professional development should focus on strategies for using technology to promote language and literacy beyond the simple use of computer programs and games, and including how to select and critique computer software.
- Providing information to families about what is occurring in the classroom related to language and literacy development as well as what families can do at home to promote language and literacy development.

These were the primary areas in which professional development needs were identified. In addition, teachers indicated a desire for professional development that provided specific suggestions that included hands on ideas. One teacher said "we need ideas that are real specific".

Professional Development Recommendations. The professional development needs identified above reflect a more global professional development issue. Based on all of the data reported above, it is clear that teachers have some very good basic skills related to language and literacy development. However, to support the refinement of those skills and to facilitate teachers' development and use of more complex, individualized, and higher order literacy activities and strategies, professional development activities should be comprehensive, holistic, and coordinated. This forms the foundation for the following recommendations:

- Professional development should reflect a holistic approach to language and literacy that is parallel to the type of approach that we want teachers to be implementing in their classrooms. Professional development activities should begin with information on the "many kinds of knowledge and skills that can be acquired in the preschool years in preparation for reading achievement in school" (National Research Council, 1998). Specific strategies and activities should be addressed only after teachers have an understanding of literacy as a broad area and the many skills that fall under that umbrella. This will serve the purpose of providing teachers with the information they need to understand not just what to teach but why those things should be taught. Ultimately, this will ensure that teachers can individualize their instruction to meet the needs of all children.
- In order to promote this type of approach to professional development in the area of language and literacy, a comprehensive plan should be developed. This plan should include the following components:
  a. An ongoing, comprehensive set of workshops/inservice training activities that includes an introductory session on language and literacy development and a series of sessions

that focus on sets of recommended practices for promoting language and literacy development and for supporting parents' use of these strategies at home.

b. A self-assessment process that involves the teacher and a peer. This would include a peer observation of the teacher, a self-assessment by the teacher, and a discussion of the teachers' strengths and needs. This would serve a variety of purposes. First, it would provide teachers with ongoing support. Second, it would provide teachers with a nonthreatening environment in which to critically analyze their use of recommended practices and to receive feedback to ensure that they have accurately assessed their use of the practices.

c. A professional development plan for each teacher that includes topics and activities described above and that reflects teachers' strengths and needs.

d. A process for providing teachers with technical assistance and ongoing support following training activities. This could include peer support, support from existing technical assistance entities, and/or support from administrators. In addition, professional development sessions should include opportunities for teachers to develop and receive feedback on materials and activities that apply to and meet the specific needs of that teachers' classroom related to the topic of the session.

e. A process for involving parents in the development and implementation of these activities to ensure that the activities address the needs of the families, to provide families with the information they need to support language and literacy at home, and to promote partnerships between teachers and parents.

f. A process for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development system.

The critical features of these professional development recommendations are: a) professional development should be comprehensive and coordinated rather than one shot training opportunities; b) follow-up support should be provided to ensure that the professional development system results in meaningful changes in teachers' use of the recommended practices; c) peer support should be built into the entire process; and d) families should be involved in the process. In addition, the professional development system should be created in coordination with professional development efforts for primary teachers. This would serve to build collaborative relationships between preschool and primary teachers, create a more seamless set of literacy practices, and provide both groups of teachers with knowledge about their relative responsibilities for promoting children's language and literacy skills. These features will increase the likelihood that meaningful change will occur for teachers, parents, and children.

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Appendix A
Parent Survey on Risk Factors

Parent Survey

Child's current grade:

- ☐ First year in primary (Kindergarten)
- ☐ Second year in primary (1st grade)
- ☐ Third year in primary (2nd grade)
- ☐ Fourth year in primary (3rd grade)
- ☐ Extra year in primary
- ☐ 4th Grade

What was your child's health like at birth and in the first few days after he/she was born:

- ☐ Extremely healthy
- ☐ Very healthy
- ☐ Somewhat healthy
- ☐ Not very healthy
- ☐ Not at all healthy

Please check each of the following that is true. My child:

- ☐ Is smarter than most kids his/her age
- ☐ Has a positive attitude
- ☐ Has a high self esteem
- ☐ Can bounce back after major problems
- ☐ Has good relationships with people outside the family
- ☐ Lives in a supportive family
- ☐ Gets bored easily
- ☐ Is violent
- ☐ Is depressed or moody

With whom did your child live ***before*** kindergarten?

- ☐ Both parents
- ☐ Mother only
- ☐ Father only
- ☐ Grandparents
- ☐ Foster Parents
- ☐ Mother and partner other than father
- ☐ Father and partner other than mother
- ☐ Other (please explain)_____

Please check the one that best describes your child's preschool/childcare experience the year ***before*** she/he was in kindergarten:
(Full-time: 4 or more hours per day / Part-time: less than 4 hours per day)

Head Start	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
Day Care Center	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
Private Preschool	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
Family Day Care Home	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
With Parent	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
With Family	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
Member/Relative	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time
With Neighbor	☐ Full-time	☐ Part-time

None of the above ____

Parents' highest level of education completed:

Mother
- ☐ 8th Grade
- ☐ Some High School
- ☐ GED
- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ Some Trade or Business School
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Two-Year College Degree
- ☐ Four-Year College Degree
- ☐ Graduate or Professional Degree

Father
- ☐ 8th Grade
- ☐ Some High School
- ☐ GED
- ☐ High School Graduate
- ☐ Some Trade or Business School
- ☐ Some College
- ☐ Two-Year College Degree
- ☐ College Degree
- ☐ Graduate or Professional Degree

How old were you and the child's other parent at the time of your ***first*** child's birth?
Mother _____ years old Father _____ years old

How close is the relationship between your child and his/her

Mother
- ☐ Extremely close
- ☐ Quite close
- ☐ Somewhat close
- ☐ Not very close
- ☐ Not at all close

Father
- ☐ Extremely close
- ☐ Quite close
- ☐ Somewhat close
- ☐ Not very close
- ☐ Not at all close

Please check any of the following that your child experienced ***before*** Kindergarten.

The child
- ☐ Was premature
- ☐ Had nutrition problems
- ☐ Had a language delay
- ☐ Had chronically ill sibling
- ☐ Had other disabilities

The family
- ☐ Moved
- ☐ Was eligible for free lunch
- ☐ Was eligible for reduced lunch
- ☐ Had a serious accident or illness

The parents
- ☐ Got married
- ☐ Got divorced
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Were unemployed, how long?____
- ☐ Had problems with the law/was in jail
- ☐ Received counseling for family problems

Appendix B
Transition Questionnaire

District _____
Site _____
Program Type _____
Student Type _____
Child's # _____
Pre or Post _____
Teacher # _____

Transition From Preschool to P1 (Kindergarten)

Please rate this child's preparation for P1 (Kindergarten) in the following areas as compared to the typical child in your class.

1 - MUCH WORSE PREPARED
2 - SOMEWHAT WORSE PREPARED
3 - SIMILARLY PREPARED
4 - SOMEWHAT BETTER PREPARED
5 - MUCH BETTER PREPARED

	MUCH WORSE	SOMEWHAT WORSE	NO IMPACT	SOMEWHAT BETTER	MUCH BETTER
1. Preliteracy skills development	1	2	3	4	5
2. Premath skills	1	2	3	4	5
3. Emotional development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Fine motor skill development	1	2	3	4	5
5. Gross motor skill develment	1	2	3	4	5
6. Social skills development	1	2	3	4	5
7. Child-selected activities	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teacher-directed activities	1	2	3	4	5
9. Cooperative play	1	2	3	4	5
10. Creative or imaginative play	1	2	3	4	5
11. Makes friends	1	2	3	4	5
12. Follows directions	1	2	3	4	5
13. Uses words to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
14. Functions independently	1	2	3	4	5
15. Joins in activities	1	2	3	4	5
16. At ease in school environments (e.g. cafeteria, halls, playgrounds, bathroom)	1	2	3	4	5

*Adapted from the Elementary School Teacher Questionnaire, Poisner, E. S., Bryant, D. M., & Clifford, R. M. (1988). Questionnaire for elementary school teachers. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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Appendix C
Pupil Behavior Inventory

District _____
Site _____
Program Type ___
Student Type ___
Child's # _____
Pre or Post _____
Teacher # _____

PUPIL BEHAVIOR INVENTORY*

Please CIRCLE the appropriate rating for each item for this pupil. It is not necessary to spend a great deal of time in assessing the pupil. Please answer all items, even if you are uncertain or have little information.

Ratings
VF=Very Frequently F=Frequently S=Sometimes I=Infrequently VI=Very Infrequently DK=Don't Know

1. Shows initiative	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
2. Blames others for trouble	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
3. Resistant to teacher	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
4. Alert and interested in school work	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
5. Attempts to manipulate adults	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
6. Appears depressed	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
7. Learning retained well	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
8. Absences and truancies	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
9. Withdrawn and uncommunicative	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
10. Completes assignments	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
11. Influences others toward troublemaking	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
12. Inappropriate personal appearance	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
13. Seeks constant reassurance	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
14. Motivated toward academic performance	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
15. Impulsive	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
16. Lying or cheating	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
17. Positive concern for own education	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
18. Requires continuous supervision	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
19. Aggressive toward peers	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
20. Disobedient	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
21. Steals	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
22. Friendly and well-received by other pupils	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
23. Easily led into trouble	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
24. Resentful of criticism or discipline	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
25. Hesitant to try or gives up easily	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
26. Uninterested in subject matter	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
27. Disrupts classroom procedures	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
28. Swears or uses obscene words	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
29. Appears generally happy	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
30. Poor personal hygiene	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
31. Possessive of teacher	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
32. Teases or provokes students	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
33. Isolated, few or no friends	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK
34. Shows positive leadership	VF	F	S	I	VI	DK

*Woikeit, Delone, Lawson, & Weikart (1993). High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press

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Appendix D
Indicator/Experiences Form

Child-Related Outcomes
Overview of Document

The National Education Goals provide a context for understanding this document. The first goal states: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn". This goal has three parts: a) Children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs to help prepare children for school; b) Every parent of a preschool child will be their child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need; and c) Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhance prenatal health systems.

Readiness is a somewhat controversial term but can be thought of as ensuring that children have a foundation upon which to be successful later in life. In order to provide that foundation, early childhood experiences must: a) promote children's physical development, social maturity, emotional adjustment, and cognitive capacities; b) nurture children's motivation to learn; and c) give children a start in communicating and solving problems. For these early experiences to be helpful to children, children must be healthy, immunized, well-nourished, and well-rested. This foundation depends on three things: a) supportive families; b) health and well-being; and c) high quality early learning experiences. While this document focuses on early learning experiences and children's development, these factors alone cannot be used to determine children's readiness for school. They represent only one factor.

The attached document is a draft list of desired child-related outcomes that should be used to guide the development of high quality preschool programs and early childhood experiences. Early Childhood programs should provide developmentally appropriate activities that promote the development of outcomes that are generally agreed upon, such as those drafted for your review on the following pages. Any such outcomes should not be used in isolation as prerequisite skills or competencies for determining children's eligibility for kindergarten for the following reasons:

- While these proposed outcomes are ones that are believed to help children have a successful kindergarten experience, it is unlikely that all children will have mastered all of these outcomes prior to entering kindergarten. There are no "gateway skills" required for kindergarten and there are no "exit criteria" for preschool;
- Children's readiness for kindergarten depends on parental support, early experiences, child-related competencies, and the quality of the kindergarten program. A high quality kindergarten program is one that accommodates the individual child...one that is "ready for the child" since children demonstrate a wide range of experiences and skills prior to entering school.

These proposed outcomes are designed to help focus early childhood curriculum and activities to promote child development and later success. They should not be used as a checklist for deciding whether a child should enter kindergarten since any child in Kentucky who is five by October 1 is entitled to enroll in kindergarten (the beginning of the primary program).

Indicator	Important/Relevant (Include)	Not Sure	Not important, Irrelevant (Exclude)
Physical Well-Being/Motor Development			
Physically Healthy			
Well rested			
Well nourished			
Immunized			
Cuts with scissors			
Takes outdoor clothing off and on			
Feeds self independently			
Cares for own toileting needs			
Social/Emotional			
Respects others and their property			
Initiates and maintains peer interactions			
Plays cooperatively with other children			
Attends to peer or adult who is talking (telling a story, sharing) to a group			
Takes turns in play and/or conversation			
Shows empathy and caring for others			
Expresses emotions and feelings appropriately			
Seeks out assistance if hurt or in need of help			
Negotiates appropriate solutions to conflict			

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Indicator	Important/Relevant (Include)	Not Sure	Not important, Irrelevant (Exclude)
Cognition, General Knowledge, Approaches to Learning			
Understands time (morning, afternoon, early, late) and/or sequence of daily events			
Answers questions about self such as family, address, age, birthday, names of significant caregivers			
Willing to try new activities			
Persists at tasks/activities			
Makes choices			
Shows pride in accomplishments			
Stays focused and productive in both group and independent activities			
Represents ideas, emotions, feelings through constructions and art			
Classifies objects			
Shows understanding of concepts related to numbers and order (e.g., one to one correspondence, less than, more than, size, etc.)			
Counts up to 10 objects			
Identifies and Names Colors			

Indicator	Important/Relevant (Include)	Not Sure	Not important, Irrelevant (Exclude)
Language/Literacy			
Communicates wants, needs, and thoughts verbally			
Shows interest in activities associated with reading (e.g., books, print, telling stories)			
Answers questions about a story or event			
Recognizes that there is a relationship between letters and sounds			
Recognizes letters of the alphabet			
Uses themes (pretends) in play or communication			
Prints first name			
Copies simple print			
Writes and draws rather than scribbles			
Uses picture and or context cues to construct meaning from text			
Exhibits book handling skills			
Classroom Behaviors			
Follows classroom rules			
Responds appropriately to teacher directions			
Manages transitions independently			
Replaces materials and cleans up work space			
Waits appropriately			

Appendix E
Final Draft: Indicators/Experiences

Guidelines for Providing High Quality Early Education and Care

This document was developed using a consensus process that is described in more detail in a report provided to the Kentucky Department of Education (Hemmeter & Wilson, 1999). This process included parents, preschool teachers, head start teachers, child care providers, elementary school teachers, and administrators. The document includes a set of guidelines for providing preschool children with the high quality early experiences and care that are necessary for supporting children's transition to and success in kindergarten. The document is designed to be used both by parents and early care and education professionals.

Throughout the development process, participants expressed concern about how this document would be used. In response to these concerns, we compiled the following list of assumptions that upon which this document in based:

a. Readiness for and success in kindergarten is dependent on high quality early experiences and care which requires collaboration between families, communities, and early care and education professionals;
b. Education and care for preschool education is qualitatively different than education and care for school-age children and therefore, these guidelines may not be entirely consistent with similar guidelines for k-12 programs;
c. These guidelines should be used to ensure quality programs and not as criteria for including or excluding children from kindergarten. All children who turn five by October 1 are entitled to attend kindergarten.

Appendix F

Parent Survey on Reasons Why Eligible Children Did or Did Not Attend the Kentucky Preschool Program

Parent Survey

My child did not attend Kentucky's Preschool Program as a four year-old because (please check all which apply):

- ☐ I did not know that the Preschool Program existed.
- ☐ I did not know that my child could attend.
- ☐ I did not know that the school would provide transportation.
- ☐ I did not want to put my child on a bus.
- ☐ I thought the program was too far away from my home.
- ☐ I thought 4 year-olds were too young to go to school.
- ☐ I needed care all day long for my child and the program was only half day.
- ☐ The starting or ending time of the program was not good for my child or for my family.
- ☐ English is our second language.
- ☐ I did not know if the program would benefit my child.
- ☐ I prefer to take care of my child at home.
- ☐ I had other arrangements for my child. Please explain.

_____

- ☐ Other (please explain any other reasons). _____

_____

Thank you for your help with this survey. Please remember that all information is confidential. Please mail your reply back to us as soon as possible.

Parent Survey

I sent my child to Kentucky's Preschool Program because (please check all which apply):

- ☐ The program was free.
- ☐ The program provided transportation.
- ☐ The program was close to my home.
- ☐ The staff at the preschool was bilingual.
- ☐ I wanted my child to get the Special Education services at the preschool.
- ☐ After school care was available.
- ☐ I knew the person who would be my child's teacher.
- ☐ I wanted my child to learn numbers and the alphabet, and how to read.
- ☐ I thought the program would benefit my child.
- ☐ I wanted my child to learn new things.
- ☐ I felt that the program would prepare my child for kindergarten.
- ☐ I wanted my child to be with other children.
- ☐ I liked that the program included children with and without disabilities.
- ☐ A friend recommended the program to me.
- ☐ I knew someone whose child was also in the program.
- ☐ My older child(ren) were in the program.
- ☐ I have a friend or relative who works or volunteers at the school.
- ☐ I wanted to get to know other parents.
- ☐ The preschool has parent education and training opportunities.
- ☐ I wanted to send my child to a preschool that met for a full day.
- ☐ I was contacted /recruited by the staff.
- ☐ Other (please explain any other reasons.)

Thank you for your help with this survey. Please use the enclosed envelope to mail your reply to us as soon as possible. All information is confidential.

Appendix G
Recommended Practices Observation Checklist

Classroom Practice Observation

I. Book Reading (*write the names of the books)*

Teacher reads aloud to whole class □ Yes □ No	
Teacher reads aloud to small groups (>2 children) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher reads a favorite book more than once (ask teacher) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher reads at a speed appropriate for the children in the class □ Yes □ No	
Teacher reads with expression □ Yes □ No	
Teacher asks predictive questions □ Yes □ No	
Teacher asks children to analyze characters' motivations □ Yes □ No □ N/A	
Teacher encourages children to use their imagination during story discussions □ Yes □ No □ N/A	
Teacher asks questions which relate stories to children's experiences □ Yes □ No	
Teacher discusses word meanings (new vocabulary) □ Yes □ No	

Teacher allows children to choose their own stories/books □ Yes □ No	
Teacher provides follow-up activities after reading books □ Yes □ No	

II. Teacher-Child Interactions

Teacher carries on reciprocal conversations with children (at least 3 turns) □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
Teacher checks to make sure that children understand explanations of activities □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely □ N/A	
During structured small group activities, teacher carries on meaningful conversations (children understand topic and participate) *(teachers give comments on activities)* □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
During structured small group activities, teacher carries on meaningful conversations ***with individual children*** □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
Teacher encourages children to solve problems independently □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	

Teacher extends children's play (for example if children are pretending they are in a restaurant, teacher encourages additional menu items) □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
Teacher demonstrates or models activities (rather than only providing a verbal explanation) □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
Teacher varies amount of help to meet individual children's needs □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
Children are encouraged to work on their own (rather than teacher directing and controlling activities) □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	
If children from other countries are in class, teacher builds on their cultural backgrounds, for example: (*ask teacher*)	
Uses vocabulary from child's native language □ Yes □ No	
Includes stories from/about child's native country □ Yes □ No	
Teacher links what child already knows with new concepts (uses children's background knowledge) (*or activities*) □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Rarely	

III. Literacy Instruction

Teacher provides positive feedback during literacy activities □ Yes □ No	
Teacher provides *individualized* feedback during literacy activities □ Yes □ No	
Teacher provides written labels of items in the classroom *(more than children's names)* □ Yes □ No	
Teacher promotes learning sounds □ Yes □ No	
Teacher promotes learning the names of letters □ Yes □ No	
Teacher promotes connecting letter sounds to letter names □ Yes □ No	
Teacher demonstrates that words convey meaningful messages (*action songs*) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher uses play to foster meaningful understanding of print (for example, makes lists for children who are pretending to shop) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher encourages listening activities which assist children in understanding the structure of spoken words (for example, breaks words into syllables) □ Yes □ No	

Teacher reads nursery rhymes or other poems □ Yes □ No	
Teacher uses finger plays (*action songs*) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher writes messages and reads them to children (*or tell the child*) □ Yes □ No	
Teacher encourages children to write words, if they show an interest □ Yes □ No	
Teacher encourages children to write journal entries with pictures and then talk with teacher □ Yes □ No	
Children were encouraged to tell teacher about their pictures or work (anything they make). Teacher writes the words. □ Yes □ No	
Children "read" story books with picture cues □ Yes □ No	

IV. Environment

Classroom is organized with thematic and dramatic play settings which contain opportunities for reading and writing (*pretending area has print with or labels, dress up corner)* □ Yes □ No	
Big Books are available for children to read □ Yes □ No	

Non-fiction books are available for children to read □ Yes □ No	
Appropriate books are available to children in various areas of the classroom □ Yes □ No	
A variety of writing instruments are available and children are encouraged to use them □ Yes □ No	
The school embraces a building-wide emphasis on reading □ Yes □ No	
Tables and chairs are appropriately sized to facilitate writing activities □ Yes □ No	
Early literacy computer programs are in classroom □ Yes □ No	
Activities that promotes learning sounds are present □ Yes □ No	
Activities that promotes learning the names of letters are present □ Yes □ No	
Activities that promotes connecting letter sounds to letter names are present □ Yes □ No	

Numbers of children in the class _____

Appendix H
Parent and Teacher Surveys about Literacy Practices

Parents Survey

Please check any of the following activities that you and your child do together:

- ☐ reading story books
- ☐ reading "fact" books
- ☐ writing down your child's stories
- ☐ helping your child write letters
- ☐ helping your child write words
- ☐ listening to your child "read" books to you
- ☐ writing titles and description on your child's art work
- ☐ reading comic books and/or the Sunday "funnies"
- ☐ reading signs and labels on household items (for example, cereal boxes)
- ☐ naming objects or places outside the house (street signs, advertisements, cars, etc)
- ☐ other (please describe)

How often do you and your child talk together? (for example, talk about what happened at school) ☐ regularly ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely

Do you or your child have a library card? ☐ yes ☐ no

Do you participate in the family programs at your local library? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not applicable

Does your family subscribe to a newspaper or magazines? ☐ yes ☐ no

Does your family have a dictionary in the home? ☐ yes ☐ no

Do you know all of the shows that your child watches? ☐ yes ☐ no

How often do you watch TV with your child? ☐ regularly ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely

How often do you go to your local library with your child? ☐ twice a month ☐ several times a year ☐ rarely

If you have a baby less than a year old, how often do you talk with your infant? ☐ regularly ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely

If you have a toddler between the ages of 12 months and 3 years, how often you talk together? ☐ regularly ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely

How much TV does your child watch in a weekday? ☐ 1 hour ☐ 2 hours ☐ 3 hours ☐ more than 3 hours

How often do you read to your child? ☐ every day ☐ a couple of times a week ☐ once in a while

Please check which of the following activities your child's teacher does in school.

Reads stories to the class	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Encourages children to use their imagination during stories	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Asks questions which relate stories to children's experiences	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Discusses word meanings	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Allows children to choose their own stories/books	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Checks to make sure that children understand explanations of activities	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Uses play to help children understand printed words (for example, makes lists for children who are pretending to shop	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Reads nursery rhymes or other poems	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Uses finger plays (for example, "Where is Thumbkin?") or action songs ("Monkeys Jumping on the Bed")	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Writes messages and reads them to children	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Encourages children to write letters and/or words	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Encourages children to write or draw in journals and talk about their entries	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Encourages children to talk about pictures and then writes key words on children's pictures	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know

Please check which of the following activities/lessons are in your child's classroom

Written labels of items in the classroom	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Activities that promote learning letter names	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Activities that promote learning the sounds of letters	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Activities that promote connecting the sounds of letters to letter names	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know

If children from other countries are in class, does your child's teacher build on their cultural background? For example, does the teacher

Use vocabulary from child's native language	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know
Include stories from/about child's native country	❑ yes	❑ no	❑ don't know

We sincerely appreciate your time and thought in completing this survey.

Teacher Survey

(As you respond to this questionnaire, please consider your teaching practices over the last year)

I. Book Reading

How often do you

- read aloud to *your entire class*? approx 3/week once every day more than once/day
- read aloud to *small groups of children*? approx 3/week once every day more than once/day
- ask predictive questions? regularly sometimes rarely
- ask questions which relate stories to children's experiences? regularly sometimes rarely
- ask questions which encourage children to analyze character's motivations? regularly sometimes rarely
- encourage children to use their imagination during story discussions? regularly sometimes rarely
- discusses word meanings with children? regularly sometimes rarely
- allow children to choose their own stories/books rather than choosing yourself? regularly sometimes rarely
- provide follow-up activities after reading books? regularly sometimes rarely

II. Teacher-Child Interactions

How often do you

- carry on reciprocal conversations with children during everyday routines? regularly sometimes rarely
- carry on meaningful conversations during small group activities? regularly sometimes rarely
- carry on meaningful conversations ***with individual children*** during small group activities? regularly sometimes rarely
- encourage children to solve problems independently? regularly sometimes rarely

- provide ***positive*** feedback related to literacy activities? regularly sometimes rarely
- provide ***individualized feedback*** related to literacy activities? regularly sometimes rarely
- extend or build on children's play (for example, suggest children make a shopping list if they are "going shopping" in the dramatic play area or add to menu ideas if children are "fixing supper")? regularly sometimes rarely
- demonstrate or model activities (rather than providing a verbal explanation only)? regularly sometimes rarely
- provide written labels of items in classroom? regularly sometimes rarely
- check to see if children understand your explanations? regularly sometimes rarely
- vary amount of help depending on individual children's needs? regularly sometimes rarely
- allow children to lead activities? regularly sometimes rarely
- link what child already knows (background knowledge) with new concepts? regularly sometimes rarely

III. Literacy Instruction

- I read nursery rhymes or poems. every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week
- I lead child in finger plays or action songs. every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week
- I set up activities which demonstrate the meaning of words (simple commands, such as jump, bend). every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week
- I encourage listening activities which assist children in understanding the structure of spoken words (emphasize syllables). every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week
- I write messages and read them to children. every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week
- I encourage children to write journal entries with pictures and/or words and then talk with me. every day 2 to 3 times a week once a week

- I encourage children to tell me about their art work. I write their descriptions on their art work. — every day / 2 to 3 times a week / once a week
- I encourage children to participate in reading *Big Books*. — every day / 2 to 3 times a week / once a week
- I use play to foster meaningful understanding of print (for example, making lists for children who are pretending to shop). — every day / 2 to 3 times a week / once a week

If I have children from other countries, I build on their cultural backgrounds, for example

- Use vocabulary from child's native language — Yes / No
- Include stories from or about child's native country — Yes / No
- My school embraces a building-wide emphasis on reading. — Yes / No
- Children in my class are beginning to learn the names of letters. — Yes / No
- Children in my class are beginning to learn the sound of letters. — Yes / No
- Children pretend to read story books with picture cues — Yes / No

Please check if you are able to implement the following practices:

- ☐ Occasional reviews of research-based literacy strategies
- ☐ Occasional reviews of assessment procedures
- ☐ Choosing from among a variety of research-based strategies, depending on children's individual needs

Check any one of the following which summarize(s) your approach to literacy instruction:

- ☐ a balance of phonics and whole language
- ☐ mainly phonics in isolation
- ☐ phonics within a meaningful context
- ☐ mainly whole language
- ☐ daily writing activities for most children
- ☐ encourage children to write words if they show an interest

IV. Classroom Environment

• My classroom is organized with thematic and dramatic play settings which contain opportunities for reading and writing	Yes	No
• Appropriate books are available to my children in various areas of our classroom (for example, books about pets near to the gerbil or gold fish).	Yes	No
• A variety of writing instruments and materials are available for children to use	Yes	No
• Tables and chairs are appropriately sized to facilitate writing practice	Yes	No
• *Big books* are available for children to read	Yes	No